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TAGS: PHUM PREL UNSC BM

SUBJECT: GAMBARI REPORTS "SOME PROGRESS" IN BURMA

REF: A. USUN 662

¶B. USUN 666

Classified By: Ambassador Khalilzad, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: UN Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari told Ambassador Khalilzad on September 3 that despite negative press reports, his recent visit to Burma delivered some progress on process. Though he was unable to explain Aung San Suu Kyi's (ASSK) unwillingness to meet with him, Gambari pointed out that he met with Labor Minister and Liaison Officer Aung Kyi, met twice with the National League for Democracy (NLD) Executive Committee, and also had a good meeting with the Prime Minister. He acknowledged, however, that his achievements with the regime were minimal. He commented that the atmosphere in Burma was better than during his March visit, but that progress was "not in the bag." He also gave a brief account of his travel in the region. Ambassador Khalilzad conveyed U.S. disappointment with Gambari's inability to meet with ASSK or Senior General Than Shwe. He told Gambari that the visit could not be considered a success and that the United States, the Security Council and Gambari need to take stock and carefully assess next steps. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Special Advisor Gambari complained that press reports on his recent visit to Burma focused on what did not happen -- namely that he did not see ASSK or Senior General Than Shwe. He remarked that ASSK's refusal to attend their scheduled meeting was "totally unexpected." Gambari was unable to offer any explanation but noted that ASSK subsequently refused her doctor and additional food deliveries. Only her lawyer had access, he said. Gambari speculated that ASSK was focused on pursuing her case against the regime challenging her house arrest.

¶3. (C) Gambari said that he conveyed to the National League for Democracy (NLD) Executive Committee the five messages and themes he outlined for the Security Council and Group of Friends prior to his visit (reftel), which had been "blessed" by the Council, Group of Friends, President of the General Assembly and Secretary General. The Executive Committee reportedly agreed that he should pursue four of the five, but had strong reservations about election assistance because the NLD "was not prepared to discuss elections at this point."

¶4. (C) Though Gambari admitted that he was not able to achieve what he set out to accomplish during his visit, he said the regime did agree to support "regularized" UN engagement and added that a UN staff member could apply for a visa to stay in Rangoon between visits. According to Gambari, the regime "could cooperate with areas of the economic forum" Gambari had proposed in the past and told him they would provide proposals to move this forward. On elections, the GOB said they would accept help from the UN only after they had established the Elections Commission. They would also consider the release of political prisoners as part of an amnesty program. Finally, Gambari said that according to the junta, the interruption in dialogue between

the regime and ASSK was not deliberate and they intended to resume dialogue as soon as possible. The regime was aware of ASSK's desire to raise the level of the dialogue, but preferred to resume dialogue between ASSK and Aung Kyi first.

¶5. (C) Gambari gave a brief account of his follow-on travel to Thailand and Indonesia. He said that he met with Thai Prime Minister Samak who, despite claims of being supportive of the UN, released "unfortunate comments to the press that ASSK should be disregarded" the day after their meeting.

Gambari also met with Thai Foreign Minister Tej who stressed that the fate of Burma was in the hands of the Burmese. In Indonesia, Gambari said that President Yudhoyono expressed his interest in convening the small focus group comprising Indonesia, India, China, Burma and the UN, before the UNGA.

¶6. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad told Gambari that he was looking forward to Gambari's brief to the Council early this month as soon as the Council settles on a date. He cautioned Gambari that his inability to meet with ASSK and Senior General Than Shwe was a disappointment and reminded him that there were outstanding requests by the Council and the international community for concrete progress on the release of political prisoners, including ASSK, as well as the commencement of a genuine, inclusive dialogue. He remarked that the United States views Gambari's efforts regarding the economic forum as a reward for good behavior, which the regime has not earned. Khalilzad said that Gambari's recent visit was not a success and told him that the United States would need to take stock of the situation. He added that the U.S. and the Security Council would carefully consider next steps, adding that Gambari should do the same.

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Khalilzad